A COMMUNITY ASSET

Unable to meet the demands of running a nine-hole course, the Grant family, with their local government, converted their facility into a community park. By John Torsiello

For 14 years, Veronica Valley Golf Course in Leelanau, Mich., was a fairway of dreams for William and Diane Grant and their extended family.

Dedicated to William Grant's late grandmother, Veronica Schaub-Peplinski, a woman who liked to make dreams come true, the course — a true mom-and-pop operation — opened in 1991 and for nearly a decade and a half delighted visitors with its challenge and whimsy.

"We purchased the property with help from grandma and grew strawberries on it for several seasons," Diane Grant says. "When the bottom dropped out of the market we started to wonder what else we could do with the land. We looked into creating a campground, but there were already two popular campgrounds in the area. One day, one of the guys from the conservation service told us the property would make a beautiful golf course. A couple of hours later Bill was out in the field and a guy went by with golf clubs in the back of his car. That was another hint and we thought, 'let's build a golf course.'"

Which the couple began to do with some trepidation in 1989, first clearing the land, and then seeding the course in 1990 and opening the nine-hole, 3,203-yard par-35 layout in the spring of 1991.

Diane Grant admits she and her husband didn't know what a tee was when they set out to create their course. "Really, we had no clue what we were doing. Nobody in the